

Effects of Dog Massage on Post-op Patients
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3/12/18

The art of massage has been around for thousands of years. The art has knowingly benefited humans, but animals have also been cared through massage, especially dogs. Inside all life is an energy called chi. Chi is the fundamental life force that flows through all. Given specific areas of a dog's body, the chi force can be adjusted through specific massage techniques by a practitioner. These benefits may include increased oxygenation, improved joint flexibility, relaxation, and pain relief. Moreover, the Institute for Integrative Healthcare finds that massage therapy for animals has been shown to:

1. Relieve muscular tension, spasms and pain
2. Reduce trigger point formation
3. Reduce scar tissue
4. Increase range of motion
5. Improve tone in weak muscles
6. Relieve intestinal gas and aid in digestion
7. Interrupt the pain cycle by activating sensory receptors
8. Increase circulation
9. Increase lymphatic circulation and immunity
10. Decrease blood pressure and reduce heart rate
11. Calm animals – massage increases dopamine and serotonin levels and is linked to decreased stress levels

According to "Canine Massage Techniques and Clinical Applications", The goals for massaging such patients are to provide comfort and relaxation. After the postoperative period, massage can be continued as the patient transitions from inpatient to outpatient status (1). The more comfortable and relaxed a patient is, the more effective the recovery. During a postoperative period, the surgical site should be avoided if massage treatment proceeds. In addition, according to the Institute for Integrative Healthcare, "massage on animals can benefit them at any time, but massage can also be utilized pre- and post-event to improve performance in those animals."

In this case study containing 10 test subjects, the purpose is to observe the effects of direct massaging with post op cadavers. The study is to observe the recovery of patient's post-op when massage treatments are applied. Five subjects were treated with massaging before spay/neuter surgeries and five subjects were not. Prior to surgery, the subject would be observed for stress and anxiety. Most patients are automatically nervous and scared when they enter a hospital environment. In general, subjects were chosen based on how fearful or calm they were. Calm and fearful behaviors are best for more accurate findings. Out of the five patients chosen to be massaged before surgery, three presented fearful behaviors and two presented calm behaviors. Of the five non-massaged patients, three presented calm behaviors and two presented fearful and vocal responses. Both groups had a well-balanced set of patients to compare massage study. Patients ages ranged from six to seven months and their weights ranged from 25 to 50 pounds. Lastly this study I believe, should show the effects massage can have on post-op

patients and reveal the changing results rather than non-massaged patients.

The study is designed to massage patients until the tenth patient is concluded. The first patient was a non-treated 7month black lab named Pepper. Before initial treatment, Pepper showed nervousness and was consistently barking in the treatment area. This first patient showed the usual response of a canine within a hospital before a procedure starts. After the procedure, Pepper was quiet and calm, and she recovered within three hours. The first patient to be massaged before the procedure was a six-month, 20-pound terrier named Rio. Rio begun by displaying fearful characteristics, although as time went on, he appeared to be just looking for attention, which meant he would be more likely open to receiving a comfort massage. I performed some assessment strokes mostly rubbing the areas I knew were simulating to him. In response, Rio appeared to recover quickly than Pepper.

The third patient was a seven-month French bulldog named Winnieford. Winnieford displayed calm characteristics for a young dog. By being the third patient, Winnieford was to be just observed and not massage treated. After the procedure, Winnieford was very lethargic with a recovery of about three hours. The fourth patient was a seven-month hound mix named Austin. he was very fearful and had to be muzzled for pre-op preparations. In order to make Austin more relaxed, I applied slow and then quick, long strokes to produce simulation. Austin showed some calmness with being massaged. He did not give any resistance during pre-op preparations. After the procedure, Austin was calm but lethargic, and recovery was normal in duration, though he seemed to be more alert during recovery than non-massaged patients.

The fifth patient was Luna, a six-month English bulldog. Luna showed normal anxiety behavior before pre-op procedures begun. Luna was not massaged before surgery. After surgery, Luna was still very sedated. She had very low energy, and her recovery still was normal. The sixth patient was an energetic, six-month lab named Murphy. I assessed Murphy with fast strokes over his body. He displayed more calm behavior after. The massaging really helped Murphy and he did not resist to anything prior to after being massaged. He also recovered greatly. The seventh and ninth patients were Busy, a seven-month puppy, and Einstein, a seven-month beagle. Both patients were very energetic prior to entering the hospital. They were a challenge to keep still for pre-op checks, and both were very vocal. After surgery, both patients were very lethargic, and Einstein displayed vocal discomfort while recovering.

The eighth and tenth patients were Winston, a six-month King Cavalier and Spooky a Portuguese water dog. Spooky was nervous before I massaged her. Winston was calm and very eager to be touched and comforted. Both patients received the basic massage motions before pre-op procedures. After treatment, both patients were calm but recovered quicker as predicted before previous patients.

In conclusion of the study, close to all patients that were massaged recovered more quickly then patients that weren't massaged. This clearly shows that massage on animals can benefit them, especially for pre and post-op care. There are also many other clinical applications that can be applied into the canine medical field. Techniques would be

slightly different between chronic pain patients and sick patients. Overall, using the techniques of compression, friction and direct pressure, post-op massage patients have shown quicker recovery than non-massaged patients.

WORKS CITED

1. Robinson, Narda G., DVM, Shelly Sheets, CMT. Canine Medical Massage Techniques and Clinical Applications. Lakewood: AAHA, 2015.
2. Dematteo, Leslie LMT, MS. "11 Wonderful Benefits of Animal Massage." Integrative Healthcare. 30 September 2015. Integrative Healthcare. 20 April 2018 <<https://www.integrativehealthcare.org/mt/archives/2016/09/11-wonderful-benefits-of-animal-massage.html>>.